Angie Lake

From: Dan Roeske <daniel.roeske@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 7, 2016 5:22 PM
To: Angie Lake
Cc: Dan Roeske
Subject: SB 279 / SB 280

I am writing to the Committee in my capacity as Vice President of the Grosse Pointe Public School System Board of Education. While I do not speak for the Board, I am asking that the Committee either table or reject SB 279 and SB 280. These two bills would directly impact a school district's ability to work in partnership with its bargaining units.

As I see it, SB 279 prohibits a school employee to receive retirement credit for time earned on a released basis, even though the District is reimbursed for that time. The Senate Fiscal Agency estimates this legislation will cost the Michigan Public School Employee Retirement fund almost one million dollars from loss of reimbursement that the local associations pay to districts for their MPSERS contribution. It would be unfair for the State to have to bear that cost.

Regarding SB 280, the bill limits the ability of local school districts to bargain release time for any purpose with the local union unless that time is fully reimbursed by the local association. This is a direct attack on our local control. Our Board knows what our community wants and needs to operate efficiently, and this Bill removes that ability for us to respond to our community.

The ability of our union leaders having release time to work with our administrators is a success best practice for Grosse Pointe. The time provided to work jointly with administrators on school improvement committees, planning of professional development training and increasing collaboration on solutions to prevent financial crises all help us meet our strategic goals. These two bills would destroy our District's forward progress.

I urge you to table or reject outright SB 279 and SB 280.

Respectfully,

Daniel Roeske

Grosse Pointe Board of Education Vice President

Grosse Pointe Farms, MI

Angie Lake

From: Judy Gafa <2158mos@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, December 7, 2016 6:10 PM
To: Angie Lake
Cc: gpea2014@yahoo.com
Subject: Bill279 and 280

Dear Senators

Please consider this email testimony against Bill 279 and 280.
The Senate Fiscal Agency estimates this legislation will cost the Michigan Public School Employee Retirement fund approximately $900,000, as a result of the loss of reimbursement local associations pay to districts for their MPSERS contribution. Instead of the union, the state would have to bear that cost. Makes no fiscal sense at all.

For Bill 280

cases, local associations do not have the funds to fully pay the salary costs. **However, the larger issue is one of local control. Local school boards have determined that for the efficient operation of their district, bargaining release time is essential.** The myth is that release time is used exclusively for "union business." This is far from the truth.

Association leaders use release time to work jointly with administrators on school improvement committees, planning professional development training and increasingly, collaboration on solutions to prevent financial crises. All of the work done by release time employees cannot be done after school, in the evenings or on weekends after a teacher has finished teaching a full day of class. Just as school administrators must deal with some issues during the school day, so too must association leaders, especially in large districts with hundreds of staff and many buildings.

There are a myriad of issues that occur during the school day that can involve school staff, parents, students, program administration, transportation, food service and building maintenance that need to be addressed as they occur. Problems resulting from those issues more often than not touch on the interests of school employees and the local union. **The ability to deal with these issues immediately greatly increases the efficiency of the district.** The decision on whether to have release time employees is one that should be made at the local level by school boards and administrators who must deal with these problems on a daily basis.

Thank you for your time

Judy Gafa Grosse Pointe Board of Education Trustee

Sent from my iPhone

Angie Lake

From: Jennifer Verleger <JVerleger@mtpleasant.edzone.net>
Sent: Wednesday, December 7, 2016 9:47 PM
To: Angie Lake
Subject: Concern

Hello Angie --

I wanted to express to you my concern regarding Senate Bills 279 and 280. I want you to know that there are concerns for both district and association officials. I am sorry that I will not be able to attend the hearing tomorrow morning.

I appreciate your time and attention to the concerns and opposition that is being expressed currently.

Thank you for your time!

Jennifer Verleger
Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Curriculum
Mt. Pleasant Public Schools
720 North Kinney Avenue
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

(989) 775-2303
jverleger@mtpleasant.edzone.net
(989) 775-2309 (Fax)

Angie Lake

From: Niczay, Thomas <[redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, December 7, 2016 10:21 AM
To: Angie Lake
Subject: SB 279-280

I'm opposed to SB279- because it will require settlement of labor disputes to occur after regular business hours which will not only create an additional practical burden on school administration, but also create a financial drain on the district by requiring overtime pay for employees.

I'm also opposed to SB 280- it also I fear will cause a financial burden because moving all labor/management issues to non-business hours will likely become a targeted bargaining tactic against management, which likely will cause payment by management to union officials.

Thomas Niczay
Superintendent
Hamtramck Public Schools
tniczay@hamtramck.k12.mi.us
313-892-2012

Angie Lake

From: Van Leuwen, Nancy <[redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, December 7, 2016 12:07 PM
To: Angie Lake
Cc: Gutman, Kenneth; Szymanski, Daryl
Subject: Senate Bills 279 and 280

I am writing as a former released time Walled Lake Education Association President and a current Walled Lake Consolidated School District school board member. It appears that the intent of Senate Bill 279 and 280 is to be punitive to public education, local control, union service and general staff involvement in our District.

These bills would not save the Walled Lake Schools money as it would increase retirement costs and would possibly require additional personal to handle issues normally dealt with by our WLEA president. It would greatly hamper our efforts to work cooperatively with our over 800 teachers and the local WLEA president in areas of negotiations, curriculum development and management, teacher relations and evaluation procedures,and daily issues that require immediate attention. These bills would once again take away local control. We bargained the full time release of our local WLEA president in 1992 and have found that the presidents service in this capacity has been invaluable to our administration, our teachers, and even our parents and students.

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We pride ourselves in Walled Lake in the remarkable working relationship we have with all of the stake holders in our District. Senate Bills 279 and 280 would only work to weaken or even destroy what we have established for the good of our students, parents and all employees. Please do not take any action on these bills other then ending any further consideration.

Most sincerely,
Nancy van Leuwen
Walled Lake Consolidated School District Board of Education Trustee

Angie Lake

From: Tom McKee <tmckee@eupschools.org>
Sent: Wednesday, December 7, 2016 12:18 PM
To: Angie Lake
Subject: Senate Bills 279 and 289

Hello,

My name is Tom McKee and I am the superintendent of Whitefish Township Community Schools. I am writing because I am unable to attend the hearing in person, but would like it to be entered in to the record that our school district opposes Senate Bill 279 and Senate Bill 280. If you would like to discuss our opposition to these bills, please contact me at (906) 492-3353.

Respectfully,
Tom McKee

--

Thomas O. McKee

Superintendent
Whitefish Township Community Schools
7221 M-123
Paradise, MI 49768
O: (906) 492-3353
C: (906) 630-0814
tmckee@eupschools.org

Angie Lake

From: Gutman, Kenneth <[redacted]>
Sent: Wednesday, December 7, 2016 12:22 PM
To: Angie Lake
Subject: SB 279 and 280

As the superintendent of one of the largest schools districts in Michigan, I feel compelled to weigh in on Senate Bills 279 and 280. Any bill that would prohibit the ability of a local school district to bargain any release time, for any purpose, with the local union unless that time is fully reimbursed by the local association is nonsense. School districts are governed by boards of education that are elected by the school community. As such, they should be able to continue to bargain in good faith with their unions, fully understanding that, if they do not adequately represent their community, they will likely be voted out in the next election.

We are proud of the relationship we have with our unions in Walled Lake, and we have, unfortunately, had to agree to concessions for the last several years. Our unions have been professional partners, focused on the needs of our children, and we are thankful for that. The decision on whether to have release time employees is one that should continue to be made at the local level by school boards and administrators.

Kenneth Gutman
Superintendent of Schools
Walled Lake Consolidated Schools
850 Ladd Road, Building D
Walled Lake, MI 48390
248.956.2011

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Angie Lake

From: ROGER MARKHAM <[redacted]>
Sent: Wednesday, December 7, 2016 1:48 PM
To: Angie Lake
Subject: Fw: SB279 and SB280

On Wednesday, December 7, 2016 1:42 PM, ROGER MARKHAM <rwmjem@sbcglobal.net> wrote:

Dear Ms. Lake,

As the former Superintendent of Van Dyke Public Schools in Warren, MI, I feel I must voice my opposition to the two bills that are being considered which would seriously impact the ability for the union and the district to function. It is critical that the two sides are available to meet and discuss issues that arise during the operation of a school district. If release time is eliminated for the union officers, that would mean the meetings would be held after school hours which would cause many difficulties.

While some could see this as a money saving tactic, I don't think that any savings would be realized. When I was superintendent we had an excellent working relationship with the union and together we solved problems when they arose and many times we were able to avoid problems before they became a reality. A crucial part of our relationship was the ability for the key members of the administration to meet with the union officers during the day. With the heavy work load both sides experience, after school meetings were held many times but the release time was important because it provided an opportunity to meet when needed.

If the Union officials are unable to gain retirement credit for the time that they are released, it will be more difficult to find people willing to serve in those positions. This seems like it is designed to punish union members and especially the officers directly impacted.

I worked in the district 37 years , 13 of them as a teacher and the last 24 as an administrator. I was high school principal for 15 years and for the last 7 years I was fortunate to serve as the superintendent of the district. During those years I had several occasions to work on issues with the union officials and I must say that the 2 bills being considered would have hindered our work immensely. I certainly hope their is strong review of this before they are passed. On the surface somebody might see it as a positive but again, all I see is negative things happening if these bills are passed.

Sincerely,

Roger Markham
586-382-2223